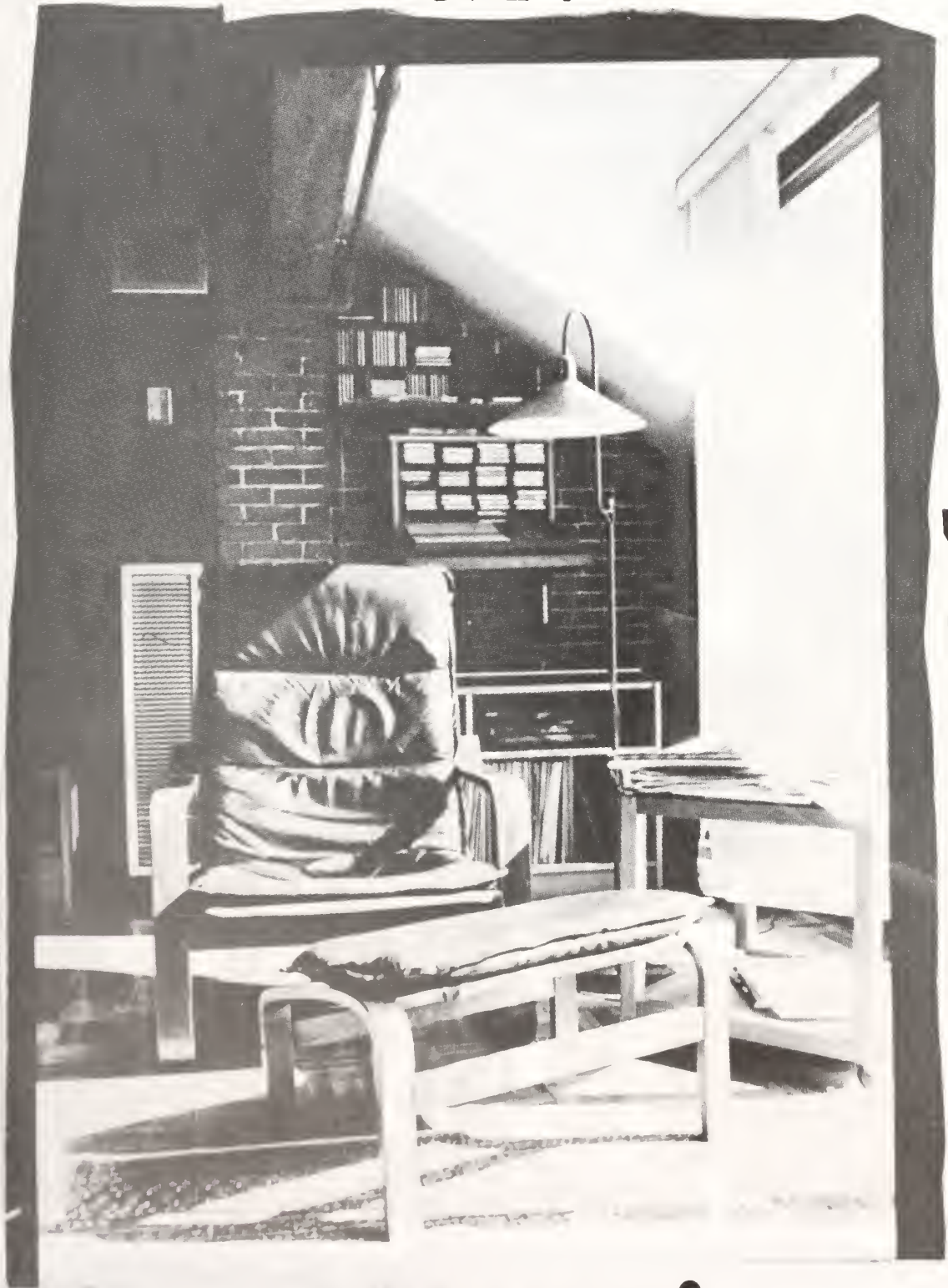


Boston Latin School



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LEASE ON LIFE

I can't think of anything to write. My script is due to NBC next week, yet my mind feels like my car windshield, ideas being cleaned away by the wipers of doubt. My eyes and jaw sting from my facial tension and the reading of scripts over the past week. This is supposed to be a comedy; this is supposed to be fun to write.

"Then why can't I?" I scream, slamming the Cross pen given to me as a wedding present by Paul Seinfeld, the son of former President Jerry Seinfeld. The pen clinks against the glass of Vodka. I take a bite of a Twinkie and wash it down with the Schmirnoff's.

"Did you call, sir?" Donald appears at the door, bear-hugging the kids' laundry.

"No, no. I'm going for a drive," I reply, not looking up from the blank screen.

I get up, pushing the cursor into the upper left-hand corner to initiate the screen saver. I wonder if Twain ever had a screen saver in his head. I suddenly feel inadequate, so I decide on the Ferrari.

I move downstairs, picking my jacket up off of the floor, trying to think where my keys are. I whistle and I hear a faint beep in my left pocket. I laugh nervously at myself, thinking of my mother's death to Alzheimer's.

As I enter the garage, I see my old hockey stick, leaning against the wall, the blade warped, the shaft swelled and chipped. I turn off the car alarm and slip into the Corinthian seats. It is cold out. The car, the first thing I bought after the royalties started pouring in, is a nice car. I should take better care of it.

The car is slow to turn over, the lights flashing and beeping in a controlled chaos as gas is injected into the engine, like a sperm to an ovum, bringing the car to life. I look down. The speedometer rolls from zero to one as I crawl out of the driveway, and rapidly progresses from the slow crawl to a run, questioning the road more and more as I accelerate, reminding me of my adolescent years.

The car responds swiftly, building up speed as I drive through sharp curves and forks in

the road. The car begins to get ahead of me, barreling through curves as if there were no tomorrow, reckless youth revisited. I shouldn't have driven after having that Vodka. Sobering up to the fact that the work and house will still be there when I return, I slow the car down.

I take a new turn at the intersection of 22 and Harvard. I laugh at the similarity between streets and that time in my life, having gone to Harvard for grad school. I drive through a new neighborhood, learning the streets and turns. I look down at the gas gauge. Still three quarters of a tank left, but the gas in this car could run out quickly. You never really know how much time Allah gives you.

I stop at a gas station, and a large man walks out, a little boy grappling his leg.

"What can I do for ya, son?" the man asks.

"I want to get onto the highway," I say.

"Sure, son. See that street? Look at me when I'm talkin' to ya, boy! You just drive down there until you reach 30. From there on, you're on your own, I won't be around to help ya anymore, son."

The boy breaks away from his father's grasp as I thank the man and drive down the street to the on-ramp. I feel nervous as I see the swiftness of the traffic on 30. I speed up the car, but keep it under control this time. The cars around me are staying at a quick but common pace, except for a few speedsters or slowpokes.

30 becomes 40, the pace diminishing considerably. I exit the highway at a familiar off-ramp at the top of a hill, and start the drive home, the darkening sky silver above. I can feel my brow wrinkling from squinting into the setting sun.

I look down at the gas gauge. Only one quarter of a tank left with no gas station to keep the car going. This tank goes by too quickly, I think.

I drive, the miles increasing. I glance at the odometer. I have driven over 65 miles.

The oil light goes on a few miles from

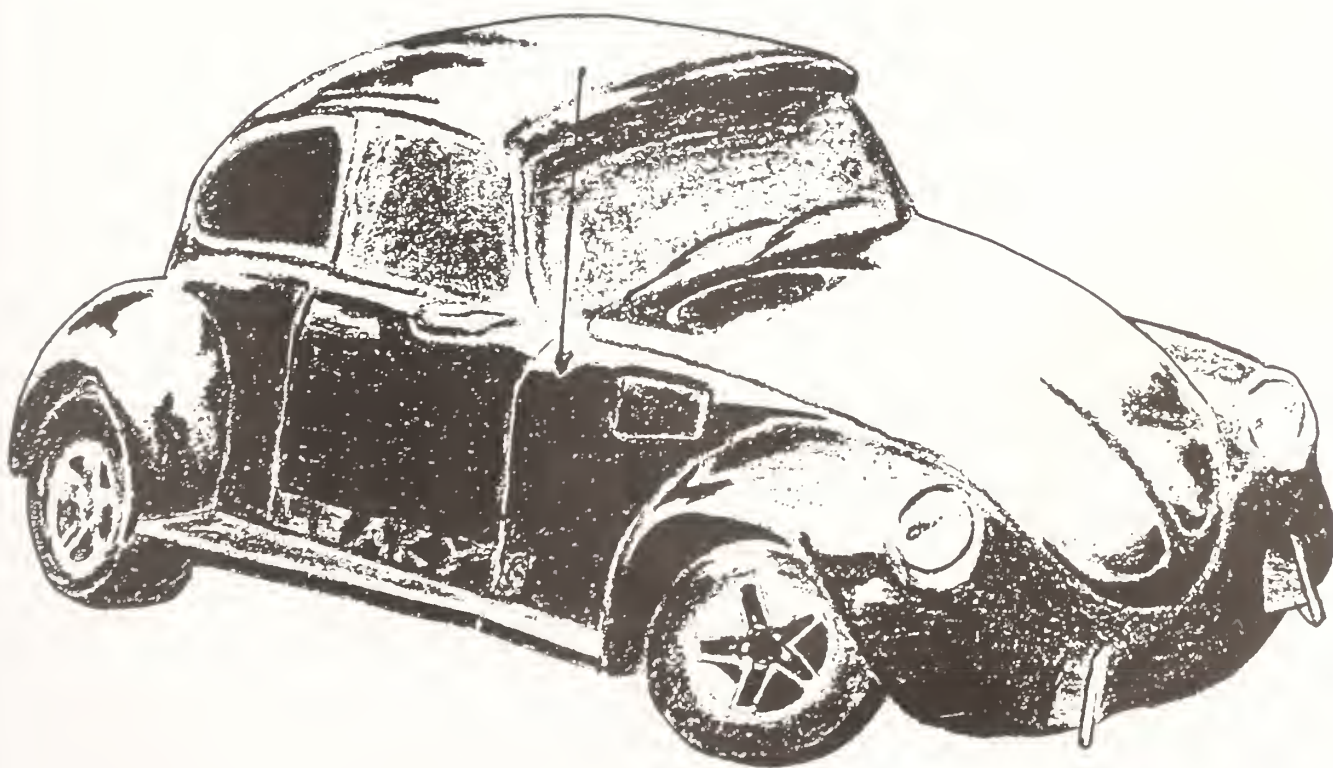
home, the aggravating red flash on the dash seems as if it will never stop. The brake light goes on as I stop to let an ambulance race off down my street. This car isn't supposed to do this, I think. This car can't do this. Why is this car doing this? Can't I make it last a little longer? There is still life left in this car!

I see my house down the road, the computer screen visible through the upstairs patio

doors. As I pull the car into the driveway the gas gauge hits zero, the engine light flashes and the car wheezes. The car sputters and dies.

I rise from the now peaceful car and head upstairs. I sit down at my computer, lean back towards the skylight and look towards the heavens. . .

—Eben Burnham-Snyder, II





IDOL

You wonder why her eyes grow beautiful
as they grow weary.
(They shine in bold defiance
of the force that makes
your own tired eyes look spent.)
You wonder why she dances
when there is no music,
and how her clumsy waltzes
can conduct
those secret, mind-held violins.

You wonder why the Band-aid on her knee
is not a blemish but
an ornament,
why it clings so blissfully
to her skin,
stretched tightly over the chiseled muscles
in her bare legs.

And you tell yourself that you do not love her.
(You cannot love the one you ache to be
and will never become.)
And you tell yourself that you will not miss her.
(You would not long for the flawless reminder
of your own imperfection.)

But you want to close her eyes with your fingertips,
because the dirty boy at the drugstore counter
does not deserve
to see her eyes.
And you want to cover her head with your jacket,
because the city-spoiled, polluted rain
does not deserve
to touch her hair.
And you want to cup your hand to her lips,
because the drunk on the bench she passes
does not deserve
to hear her laughter.
And you want to lift her and carry her
always,
because the filthy, conquered sidewalks
do not deserve
the feel of her feet.



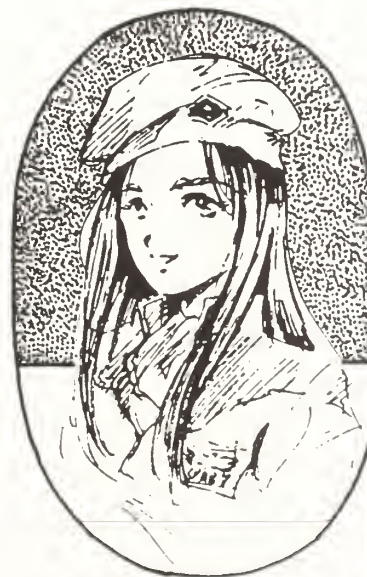
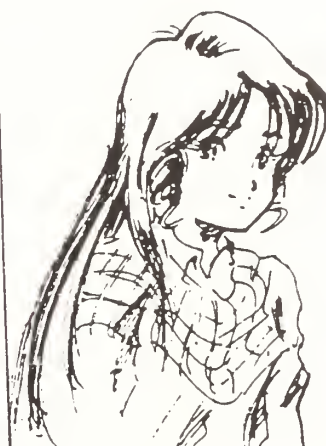
And you try to cut the throat of the
small,
 tenacious
 voice
 inside you,
shrieking that you want to take her with you.
Because there is a mind
(and is it yours?)
controlling that voice,
and knowing
that
even you
do not deserve to keep her.

And you tell yourself that it does not matter.
And you cannot quite recall what does.

So you give her up to
what's-his-name
and to the world, who will see
only eyes
and elbows
and knees
(Not hope, or soul, or symphony).

And you tell yourself that you don't recall her.
And you can't remember to forget.

—*Rebecca Morrison, I*



I FINALLY GOT TO MEET HIM. . .

I finally got to meet him. I've been wanting to go out with him for a long time.

He is not tall. He's seventeen. He has a slender physique and black straight hair. It's long, but moderately so. I think he expresses himself through the length of his hair. I am not sure though; I don't know him well enough yet to ask. But it's not about his hair. . . His eyes, they are light grey—nothing unusual. But those eyes lead to the very depth of his soul; a person with such beautifully pure eyes cannot lie. Ever.

He has a look of an artist about him. Every feature is that of an extraordinary person. The pale, animated face, nervous fingers, the light in his deep eyes.

He is an artist. He plays the violin. No, he doesn't play; it's not a game—it's his life. He talks to his violin, he caresses it, he cares for it. His violin is a moody creature. I know, because it talks back to him. It feels back for him. It lives for him. . .

He asked me where I wanted to go. I told him a violin concert. He took me to a little private music school in Cambridge. An aging woman and an athletic-looking man were playing a violin duet. They played masterfully: she, swaying her body violently, feeling for the music, he with the ease of a demi-god. I am ignorant in the field of classical music, but I knew the performance was good.

He and I, we talked. We talked before the concert and during the intermissions. We talked quickly because there wasn't much time. We talked about everything: school, colleges, books, movies, friends. We briefly touched the blushing subject of previous girlfriends and boyfriends. We said we liked each other. We smiled. We held hands. We listened to the tales of the violins.

During the second intermission I decided to find out more about him as a violinist. I felt uneasy. I am not very close to music. I can't possibly feel what he feels toward music, yet I wanted to know what he feels. I was careful; I didn't want him to know my complete ignorance

in distinguishing good music from bad.

I asked, "So how do you like the performance? I think the violinists are great!"

"Yeah, they're pretty good." Not much of an answer.

"Does *he* really play with more ease than *she* does, or is it just my imagination?"

"Well, look at him: he's a big fellow. He's stronger and younger than she is, and he played less, so he's not as tired as she is."

"That's not what I meant. I didn't mean physically; I meant the freedom of technique. . ." One last attempt to get closer to his musical side, "So, what modern music do you like? What groups do you listen to?"

He blushed suspiciously, "I don't really have much time, you know, with school and the conservatory."

"Yeah, but still, what do you like, say on MTV?"

His face was burning now. "I don't really know. . . I guess I like Nirvana. . . and Duran Duran, Jim Morrison. . . Dr. Dre."

Unbelievable combination! I looked in his magical eyes, and I didn't like the tiny sparks in the grey of the eyes. He was lying. And I knew why.

He doesn't like modern music. He probably thinks it's trash, compared to Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin. I'd even venture to say he doesn't watch MTV. . . But he is ashamed of being different! Why? I can easily admit that I don't really like today's music. I simply adore the Beatles, but I need nothing else. . . He lied to me.

"How much longer are they gonna play?" I asked.

The dark sparks burned out in his eyes. He looked at his watch. "Well, these dudes are gonna scrape on there for about half an hour still, and then we are gonna get out of here. OK?"

OK, I understand him; how he can be embarrassed of his talent and his musical preferences. He lied to me because he doesn't know me well yet. I hope we stay together long enough for him to stop pretending. —*Valerie Pasternak, II*



LA QUIERO A MORIR

The fingers on his right hand pluck the guitar strings like a spider tight-rope walking over its familiar web, never having a doubt about where to place each foot. His left hand slides flawlessly from fret to fret over the dark, wooden neck. With each fret comes a different combination forming another new chord. The lyrics coming from his mouth blend so smoothly with each note, that the guitar and his voice become one instrument.

Soft sounds escape his lips as his tongue sings its native language. The words are foreign to me, yet by seeing the affection in his eyes as he looks at her, I know exactly what he is saying. "La quiero a morir. . ." Does he really love her to death?

It mystifies me that only months of these emotions caused him to leave his country for her. He left behind the lush, green Andes, his family, and his people. . .all for her. He came to a country that he didn't know: her country. He spoke two languages, neither of them hers, yet he came. He spends Christmas away from his family so the two of them can be together. Would she have made the same sacrifices?

As she left his country, his dark fingers placed a gold chain around her pale neck. It was given to him by his mother at birth. On the thin, gold medallion hanging from the chain was inscribed his full name and date of birth. It never left his neck; not when he slept, swam, or rock-climbed. He chose to take it off for her. She would accept it only with the promise that when they saw each other again, she would return it. She still wears it now.

The same overhead light that reflects off the necklace causes their green eyes to sparkle. Or is it something else? As her pale green eyes meet his, I can tell they can't see us. Only the enchanting music and the two of them exist. They can't hear my younger brother talking on the phone, the dogs whining to be let inside, or the cars pushing through the snow on the streets. They live in a world where nothing interferes.

I wonder if the rest of my family is thinking thoughts similar to mine. Are my parents aware of the way he looks at her? Do they remember what it is like to be in love like their daughter is now? These questions fill my mind like the music fills the room, and now I look at my sister.

She is sitting next to him on the sagging, ancient couch in front of the Christmas tree brimming with ornaments. There is just enough room between them so that she can look at him as he sings to her. His fingers dance on the guitar and his voice recites the sad love song. Although he sings with a somber tone, he gives her a playful wink, and she returns it. Gradually, their gaze intensifies. What is she thinking as their eyes become fixed upon each other. . ."Le quiero a morir?"

—Clara Ellertson, III



SESTINA: BOYLSTON STREET

Hunching, huddled, creeping against the icy
Wind, hard as teeth, that freezes down the crevice
Grimy buildings, hollow eyed, dirt striped.
The bulky weight of oily, graceless life. Steps flag.
Staggering over blackened gum, with blood shot
Eyes, with only time to crawl the endless trail.

Greasy coins rattle in the trailing
Rags, dragging, shrinking over dirty ice
A shattered window, reminiscent of the shots,
The shouts at night, reaching even to that narrow crevice
Where the cockroaches live. The sidewalk was new flagged
Long ago, is now frozen into dark stripes.

Even, in that darkening and howling cold, the pin stripes
Shudder, talking briskly, red-faced, smoky breath trailing
Them, as they hurry, not seeing the dashing, ripping flags,
Or the rushing cars, pockets of warmth, dark tires on ice.
And the doors are recessed into a dark crevice
Of the building, where last week the doorman was shot.

The air has the taste and color of the shot
Of liquor splattered and mysterious, striping
With unknown scandal this dark crevice
In the wrinkled map of the world. Trails
Do not always end, but tramp through mud and ice,
Without heed to cold steps flagging.

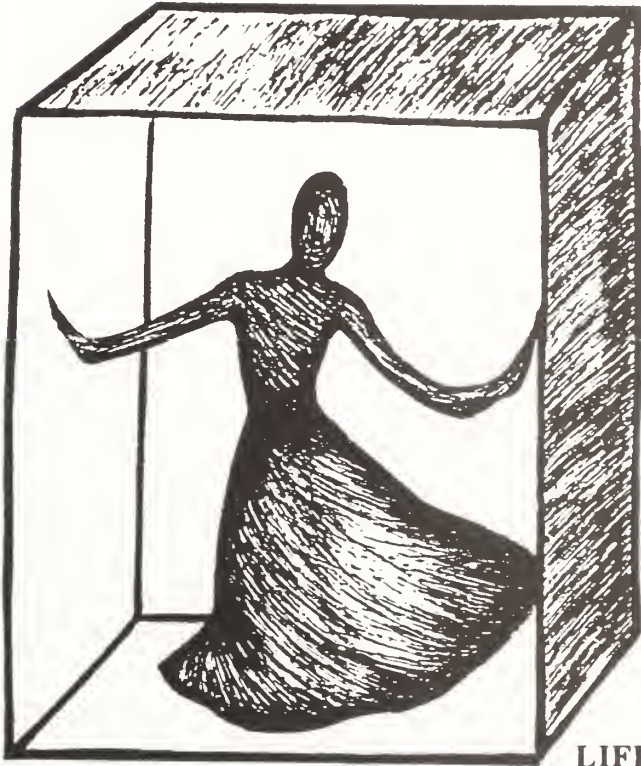
Before the sun, with banner rosy and golden flag
Shivers low and the brilliant, freezing stars shoot
The night sky, distant dispassionate eyes of ice,
Before this the air threatens heavily, grey-white, striped
With rain, streaked with a jet's streaming trail
The clouds rumple, pitted and creviced.

Dirt gathers pensively in the crevices
In the sidewalk, in the flat weak stones that flag
That broken, slabbed and crabby trail
Under the silk-stocking-smooth windows shot
With gleams of reflected light and striped
With visions of ordinary warmth against outside ice.

The buildings shake and crevice and a dark shot
Below the roaring flag, rippling its bright stripes
Footsteps slowly trail over the lingering ice.

—Malka Older, II





LIFE



I
I am in the first oceans, the first undisturbed land
I am the force pounding through the veins of bloody-mouthed savages
I am their fire, licking the black sky, feasting on the sacrifice

I am the primordial forest, in the unbroken chant of the wind
I am the woodland that hides the frightened deer, the grass that
quiets the footsteps of the stalking lion
I am the flower reaching for light on the shrouded forest floor, and
I am the majestic trees that bar its desire

I am the wrathful thunder, the swift lightning, the cannibalistic
rain
I am the smell of a land cleansed

I am the beauty of a thousand women, the strength of a thousand men
I am in the hopeful stare of a starving child, and the jingle of
coins in the pocket of those fat and rich
I am the dirty water pouring from a rust-covered faucet into the
mouths of appetent natives, shoving at each to reach the filth
I am the screams of a birthing woman, and in the tears that caress
the face of the ensanguined baby
I am the laughter of a child dancing, on the prickly grass of a
plateau that has felt the weight of fallen warriors

I am everything
I am nothing
I am the breath of life and the suffocation of earth
I am the dirt from which man has come, and to which man will go
I am the beginning and
I am the end.

--Christina Tinglof, III



FALL OF THE MORNING STAR

The Silver City is now just coming out of a period of readjustment. Michael has been called by the Name to be the new head of the heavenly hosts. New seraphim have been summoned forth to replace the Fallen Ones. It was hard decmillenium, but things are nearly back to normal.

Of course, none of the physical damages have been seen in millennia. In the immediate aftermath of the Great Battle, the Name ordered the toppled spires replaced, the cracked avenues repaired, the tumbled arches rebuilt and the shattered windows remade. No, the physicalities have already been forgotten; it is the internal changes which have required real adjustment.

Everyone was sobered by the fall of the head of the hosts, the best, the brightest, the most beautiful: Lucifer, the Light-Bringer. Most accepted the easy explanation: Lucifer was too proud. A rare few knew—and know—that that was not the truth. This is Lucifer's story.

Lucifer was created by the Name to be his second-in-command. He was the most majestic seraph in the Silver City. His every aspect was just a little bit better, just a little bit more glorious, just a little bit more wondrous than in the other angels. Lucifer was near flawless.

He executed every command of the Name with absolute perfection. He fulfilled every task completely. He denied nothing the Name asked of him and he questioned a decision of His but once—a question of judgment. He was a Follower of the Name's command, and a leader among all the other angels. He was the strongest, the fastest. And so, Lucifer was the best.

He had a keen intelligence and understood much that others did not. His devotion, his determination and his goodness made him an example to all. And so, Lucifer was the brightest.

All angels are breathtaking to behold, but he was more beautiful than words can describe. He had silvery-green eyes which seemed to flame with passion, and his strong face could only be described as sublime. All angels' wings shimmer with every color in creation, but his were just

that much more iridescent and the internal glow that all angels have was even more luminous in him. And so, Lucifer was the most beautiful.

However, what most set Lucifer apart from the others was his Love for the Name, which was far greater than that of any other angel. Greater than that of Gabriel, the Messenger of the Name and Bearer of His Word. Greater than that of Raguel, Vengeance of the Name and His Arm of Justice. Greater even than that of Michael, leader of the forces of the Name in the Great Battle and winner of that questionable victory. It was this Love, too, which caused his downfall.

Lucifer wanted only to be the best that he could for his Lord. He was always trying to make himself stronger, to make himself better. He was always testing himself.

In those days, many angels liked to spend time alone "walking" above the soaring towers of the Silver City, and this was all right. However, going into the Darkness beyond the bounds of the City was forbidden. For Lucifer, the ultimate way to test himself, to prove to himself that he was worthy of being the head of the heavenly hosts, was to "walk" in the Dark.

Lucifer heard voices in the Dark. At first, they told him that he was greater than the Name; this, he did not believe. Then they began telling him that he was unworthy. They told him that he was betraying his Lord by being His second, by being a seraph, by even existing within the bounds of the Silver City. They told him that he wasn't Devoted enough, wasn't Loving enough, wasn't Strong enough or Fast enough or Bright enough. This was Lucifer's test: he had to hear these voices and deny them.

However, as I've mentioned before, Lucifer's one great weakness was his Love for the Name and thus, his need always to do better for Him. And so, as Time wore on, Lucifer began to listen more to the voices and then—first internally, then consciously—he began to believe them.

Lucifer was tortured. He thought and thought of what could be done. He lived in

torment, plagued by questions, and his self-doubt grew to self-loathing. Finally, he concluded that if he truly Loved his Lord—which he did—then he had to leave the Silver City and venture alone into the Darkness.

But the Head of the Hosts, in his eternal Devotion to the Name, felt that he could not just leave. If he did, it would appear as though he had been driven out, banished, and that would undermine the Goodness of the Name. That, he could not do, so he staged a revolt.

He proclaimed to all that he was greater than the Creator. He moved against the Name in full battle array. He engaged the other seraphim in combat. He acted proud and martial. And to his chagrin, others joined him. They did not see through his proud façade—indeed, few did—and they truly believed him greater than the Name.

The battle was gargantuan. Towers were toppled, boulevards were shattered, seraphim themselves were destroyed.

Eventually, Lucifer allowed the forces of the Name to drive him, with his poor, ignorant, luckless forces, to the boundaries of the Great City, to the Darkness. There, those with him Fell.

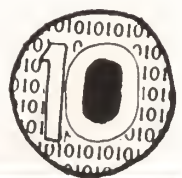
“Lucifer,” Gabriel said, extending his hand, “do not do this thing. Return with us to the side of the Name.”

Lucifer’s luminous face shone with silvery tears. He was the first in Creation to cry, the first to feel pain. He shook his head.

His agony as he Fell was the greatest ever known, before or since.

Few know Lucifer’s real story: the Name, Gabriel, likely Duma, the angel of Silence and Contemplation, Raguel and myself, Michael, glorious winner of that dubious victory, who took Lucifer’s place but never replaced him. Lucifer’s way was the hardest.

—Caitlin Fitzgerald, II



ALL CATS DIE

It was too late for him
To be just quite what I wanted
(And what, just maybe he wanted to be)
Too late not because of his age,
But due to that divine mission:
He convinced men of things
They didn't want to believe.
I still think it was their fear of believing
In new doctrines, different ways,
that made them kill him.
The God thing was just an excuse.

I was the only one brave enough--
or strange enough--
To love him in not just a
Brotherly way.
Or, perhaps, the only one shameless enough
To flaunt it.

He told stones, allegories.
Where men were livestock sometimes.
That too may have offended
very men who should have listened.

Indeed, though, my desires were
All too sacrilegious.
So I am very glad
He didn't take me up on
my suggestions.
And by instead patting me on the head,
Smiling, thanking me because
I was the only one, ever,
He managed to die a pure martyr.

But, oh, I wanted him,
despite various physical imperfections,
as this lust was the product of
Intellectual ecstasy.

He inspired desires in me,
Transcending the physical,
But exciting me no less.
He started fires too soon smothered,
by every other man,
by their suffocating restrictions.
Yet, he was like them,
though I hate to admit
That, in his brilliance,
He missed something important.

And because I realized this (that
the spiritual bliss he offered
was not meant for my sex)
I was not as sad as you might think
When I heard of his ghastly execution:
The stinging cup of hemlock.

—Ann McCarthy, 1

Enshroud your eyes and follow me
 Into quiet darkness.
 All-trusting.
 (I am taking good intentions,
 Moving
 Into Night-dimensions.)

And we can pass these stagnant hours
While the others lie
Unknowing
In their hazy, ignorant sleep.
(Vicariously,
They've rendezvous to keep.)

And we can sing our broken notes.
They are out of tune. We are
Unashamed.
For, when the others cannot hear,
Our songs ring,
Rendered free of fear.

And so we enter this second world
Where minutes linger.
Unprepared
To be filled with your voice and mine.
(Whispering
makes words clandestine.)

— Rebecca Morrison. 1

PRINCE CHARMING IN THE KINGDOM OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

It had been decided by his parents, even before his birth, that he would enter the traditional career of his family: adventuring. Even his name, Charming, reflected his parents' dreams that he would become a master dragon-slayer and princess-rescuer, like his dad. Charming had grown up to be tall, dark, and handsome, and had received excellent grades in Sweeping Princesses Off Their Feet 101, Recognizing The Fairest Princess in the Land and Winning Her Heart, and Advanced Placement Curses And How to Break Them. He had been voted Most Likely To Recieve 1/2 Of A Kingdom Before Age 25 in his graduating class, and had always felt secure in his career choice.

Until now.

Maybe it was the lack of traditional Peasant Huts surrounding his particular kingdom that had made him uncomfortable. Or the signs in the local merchants windows, "Certified Equal Opportunity Apprentice! Need No Be A Seventh Son. . . We Accept All Candidates!" Charming wasn't sure when he had begun to feel strange, but there was definitely an eerie feeling about this place. Charming turned to his Trusty Traveling Companion.

"Where in heaven's name are we?" His Companion just shrugged.

"Nowhere I've ever heard of, that's for sure. Still, your father told us to hit every kingdom we come to. Maybe we should ask someone for directions to the castle."

Charming nodded, and looked around the strangely empty streets. "There should be a Bright Young Lad or Honest Shopkeeper around here somewhere. . . Look up ahead."

Straight ahead of the pair was a girl, around Charming's age, strolling through the street. Her hair was cut to her shoulder, and she was wearing a unisex pantsuit. "Hail, friend!" Charming called. "We are travelers seeking direction. Could you help us?" The girl came nearer and considered the pair suspiciously.

"I would be happy to help you. . . As long

as you are not just asking me because you feel that women should always stop and put their lives on hold to give members of the male sex direction in life." Charming was thrown slightly off balance by this response.

"No, no, of course not. I asked you because you're the only person on the street right now." The girl looked around without interest.

"Mmmmm. . . Most workers in this area are union. . . They get two hours for lunch. They're undoubtedly at home, nurturing family values and sharing the responsibility of housework equally." Charming blinked.

"Aha. Well. I, uh, I wanted to ask you where the castle in this kingdom is." The girl looked at him hard.

"Castle?" Charming glanced at his Companion quizzically, asking silently if he had something between his teeth or two different socks on or *something* that was bringing on these strange responses. His Companion shook his head and shrugged.

Charming tried to collect his thoughts and replied, "Yes, castle. You know, where the king and queen and princess live." The girl stepped back, as if Charming had slapped her in the face, or cursed her family for all time.

"If you *mean*," she replied tightly, "a center of power where a dominant white male rules over all others without even considering the needs of the economically challenged, and without a thought as to equal representation of all ethnic groups, you have OBVIOUSLY come to the wrong place! In THIS free state, we have a pure democracy, where the economically challenged working class is as equally represented as the economically endowed class, AND where a leader is elected by ALL citizens!" She stopped to catch her breath. Charming was absolutely flabbergasted.

"You. . . You mean. . . But. . . Maybe I should explain myself. You see, I'm an adventurer. . ." The girl snorted.

"An insecure male who is terrified of commitment and must bolster his self-image by

leaving a trail of broken hearts behind him and taking advantage of girls too young to know better?" Charming had never had his life and psychological makeup dissected in such a harsh way by a stranger and found it to be an unpleasant experience.

"No, no, no, no, no, you've missed the point completely. I . . . I help people! I slay dragons that are threatening their kingdoms, I—" The girl narrowed her eyes.

"Dragons are an endangered species. Killing them is a felony." Charming blushed.

"Well. . . Trolls, then. And evil fairies. I break the curses they put on people!" The girl laughed outright.

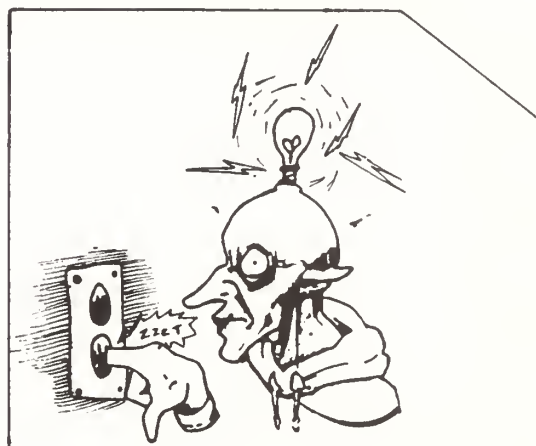
"So now you're saying that just because they are vertically challenged, or have an evil-oriented lifestyle YOU have the right to undo their work simply because you have deemed it harmful. Perfect!" Charming was getting a distinct sinking feeling as he felt the situation slip from his control. He looked to his Companion for help, but his Companion was laughing silently, finding some sort of sick humor in Charming's despair. Slightly annoyed and very embarrassed, Charming turned to the girl.

"Look," he said, apologetically, "I'm not planning on doing this forever. I just want to find a nice princess so I can settle down and get married."

"Then she can sit in the corner and look pretty and be supportive while you run the entire government and tyrannize the economically challenged, right? Well," she said nastily, "apparently you aren't very good at this *career* since you aren't married yet." Charming swallowed, completely defeated. "Well," the girl sighed, "I'll let you go on your merry way, obliterating endangered creatures and stepping on civil rights of whomever you choose. Good day!" With that, the girl turned on her heel and marched off down the road.

As Charming also slowly turned and headed down the same road he and his Companion had entered the kingdom by; he knew that he would not be having a "good day" for quite a while.

—Elizabeth Greenwood, IV



THE RAVEN

By Alexander Galich
(A TRANSLATION FROM RUSSIAN)

Today a raven flew in
He is my insomnia's captain
Even if I scream loudly and cry out
My voice does not get louder.

It can only be heard from five steps away
But even that is too much for me they say
But even that is the God's gift they say
To be heard from so far as five steps away.

—Kate Fruman, IV

SONG OF THE INNKEEPER'S DAUGHTER

By Novella Matveyeva
(A TRANSLATION FROM RUSSIAN)

You had no reason to fear my love,
I don't love all that terribly.
It was enough for me to see you around,
To have you sometimes smile at me.
When you were gone somewhere all day,
Or paid a visit to another girl,
It was enough that your overcoat
Hung on a nail in the wall.
And when you left, my transient guest,
Looking for something you'll never find,
It was enough, with your coat gone,
That its hook was left behind.
The flow of days, the rustle of years:
The rainstorms, winds, and the fog
(Oh, that memory always brings me to tears!)
Removed the nail from the log...
The fog, the wind, and the drumming rain.
The flow of days and the rustle of years...
It was enough that a hole was left
Where the wall by the nail was pierced.
And when the slightest trace of the nail was gone
With a whitewash brush just painted away,
It was enough to remember, sitting alone
That the hole was there yesterday.
You had no reason to fear my love,
I do not love all that terribly...

—Kate Fruman, IV

THAT DAY IN THE WOODS. . .

By Rabindranath Tagore
(A TRANSLATION FROM BENGALI TO ENGLISH)

That day in the woods
We swung on a cradle, entangled with flowers.

Let that memory
Sometimes awaken your mind.
Remember!

That day, as you know well,
My dream-filled thoughts drifted in the air.
In the skies, there spread a smile
As limitless and as wide as yours.

Walking on the path, as we met
For who knows what great cause or event
A full moon arose in the heavens.
Today, my time with you lasts no more.
Am I to bear the weight of this misery alone?
Never undo the bond I tied to your soul.
Never untie it, never open it up.
Never!

—Shahreen Quazi, III

The flame blazes,
A lone man gazes
At the withering depths below.
As the fire burns,
His stomach churns,
Wishing he could go.
His treatment is pathetic and cheap,
Nothing to sow; nothing to reap.
Tears streaming
For a life with no meaning.
He leaps, to be set free,
He descends from the heights
And is left to be
Peaceful for eternity. . .

Give no love,
take no sorrow,
you have gotten,
for what you asked,
let me be,
now you can see,
the fantastic display,
of your artistry.
I wish not to remain
your sweet cup of tea
for you to drink
just when you please,
and other times,
swallow unwantingly.

The whisper of the ocean against my ears.
The rhythmic movement and clash of waves.

The loud wild voices of the jungle,
The greenish wall that seems uncrossable.

I am stuck here in the desert of the city, surrounded
By sand grains of people that threaten to crush me.

High on top of the mountain it is hard to breathe.
My feet sink in the melting snow; the cold wind punches
My body.

In the intersection of the hallways of my school
I am just a tiny drop in a wave of people.

The ocean swallows things with no regrets and no Returns. I lost my hat, my shoe, my sandwich.

—Meghina Majmudar, II

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

My brother Adam is eight years old, with the mouth of Eddie Murphy and the carping sarcasm of Howard Sterns. He likes to adhere Garbage Pail Kids stickers to his bedroom door and happily illustrates scenes of carnage, bombs and victimized soldiers missing limbs—and I love him.

If you don't have a younger brother or sister in your life, you are missing much more than the immature "private parts" phase. A younger sibling can make you a beast and then the beauty, although mostly a beast.

Living with an eight year old, you will subconsciously learn all the action figure and superhero names. I was shocked the day that I picked out Donatello as the ninja turtle who wears the purple bandanna. But when you spend so much time with your tike, your whole perspective shifts. I own, meaning I bought and keep on my bookshelf, two Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. In fact, Adam often asks politely if he can borrow *my* ninja turtles. Occasionally I'll let him.

Another mutation that will take place is drawing. Little kids love to sketch, paint and scribble. You will too. It begins slowly, but as your exposure to the evil force increases, so will your mysterious ability with a pencil or marker. Eventually, in a class you will start to doodle, doodle, doodle. Then the doodle changes into a battle scene between the intrusive Saturnians and the powerless Earthlings. But that's not the worst of it. Once the peculiar masterpiece has been completed and looks finished to an adult, you need to add the child's final touch. You have the obligation to act out the war as it happens. You outline some laser fire, and then a mushroom explosion and the casualties accumulate. Half the page is covered with the glossy, smudgy jet black graphite. But it's not over; there are still

survivors—CRUNCH, they've been eaten by a polka-dotted parakeet; SMOOSH, New York City has been set ablaze by a Neptunian ninja turtle from Mars. And the nuclear winter hasn't even arrived yet.

Besides uncanny diligence with a pencil, a child will endow you with another privilege: The Child's Vocabulary. Knowledge of the acrimonious child's insults bestows you with new-found confidence, self-esteem that you just didn't have before. No classmate will escape a bump in the halls without a burning "poopyface;" no unappreciative teacher will evade a caustic "farthead;" no curt bus driver will doubt your counting ability of bus fare without a callous "dickweed..."

Ultimately, this master of duplicity teaches you a profound lesson: how to be a good parent. From the midnight preparations of his next day's lunch to the simple flicking off of his bedroom light at bedtime to when you have to yell at him because he knows a synonym for a "female dog." From the chilly afternoon when your brother scored the winning goal in the overtime soccer game—for the other team, to the sweet sound of him reading *Billy Goat's Gruff* without error, to having him teach you how to play a video game involving a Compact Disc player with stereo surround sound and four control pads, each with seven circular buttons, two rectangular switches and three oval keys.

It's a learning timewhen this vivacious eight year-old sets it all straight for you, when this seed of a developing flower demonstrates so simply how to push through the minor, superficial details of life...when he shows you with his sincere and honest "I love you" on your birthday, what are the most important things in life.

—Ben Cohen-Leadholm, II



A PURPLE CURTAIN. . .

A purple curtain, and behind it, in the shadows, another: a blue one. A brown, gaping opening in the curtain that serves as a back wall to the lit, bright stage. One man fills the sala. There are people, transformed into a part of him, gazing into their own souls, which can so easily be mistaken for his.

Did Christ talk like that? Why do people still, after centuries, look to him to unlock their hidden truth? Maybe Christ was just a brilliant actor, playing a perfect role? The voice of the man on stage is dark and soft, luring. It is navy blue and green, that color one only sees on old paintings in orthodox churches. His voice opens something we could not, or rather would not bother opening ourselves, inside. Emotions run through the white capillaries of the soft, warm malachite of his voice. It is like a warm pond in the night, and the stars looking down, and reflections in the motionless water.

The people put their hands together simultaneously, applauding. He takes the applause in, bowing silently. Why does he make me want to stand up? What he just declaimed were pieces I love, and pieces I never saw before. . . Why does he care to get up there and make me feel?

MAYBE THAT WAS WHAT CHRIST DID. IS THAT WHY THEY CRUCIFIED CHRIST?

—Kate Fruman, IV

THE LIBRARY

Our school was a large, irregularly shaped edifice. An irregular pathway, paved of asphalt, ran astride an irregularly cut lawn. I was just finishing school as I walked down the focused path, up the stairs and into the large, bruised box of brick.

It was at a series of small wooden tables that many sneakers congregated in a mixed atmosphere of work and speech. We all had our worksheets of Xeroxed ink and our yellow pencils, sharpened to a point, ready to do combat with addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication, no matter what the odds.

There we sat at our varnish-coated desks, talking, writing, and feeling good about ourselves. We condemned or supported New Kids On The Block, complained about our sisters and brothers, and in fact, life in general.

I had been looking at the many rows of high shelves, each containing many hundreds of millions of tiny blots. I then began to labor over numbers and signs, each containing many secrets, not willing to break the silence of their riddle. Frustrated, I looked up and started to talk to Philip, a younger fifth grader. We talked about teachers he was battling that year, and the ones he would battle the following year, assuming he would get mine.

We had been talking for ten or fifteen minutes when our sound traveled through the musty, hot air and found company with an unappreciative listener. The bun on her head bobbed up and down as she glared at us through her weary eyes. Her tightly wrapped bun, pierced with thin, crooked, two-pronged, then told us to leave.

—Mackie Coard, III



SCATTERED IN THE HEAVENS. . .NEVER LOST IN THE WIND

When the last thought has lingered in my mind,
When the last ray and beauty of the day has entered and departed my soul,
The last time my being is surrounded by and reassured of your love,
When I can no longer seek pleasure in watching your life joyously unfold,
and when the finale of my life ends with the last echoing of my spirit, in the rhythm of my heart,
then and only then do I allow, permit, and grant you the right to shed a tear in my name.

Don't be ashamed to cry and don't be ashamed not to.
What is natural is what encumbers you at the moment.
Remember, I would want you to be your own person.
So don't let another's principles intrude upon your mourning.

Although I'm scattered in the heavens, I'm never lost in the wind.
I visit you in your dreams, whisper in your shadow, watch you from the clouds,
and listen when you pray. I'm always there. You're never alone with your pain, for I hold you
in my loving arms, dry your eyes and remind you to anticipate the potential of tomorrow.

You say I passed into a higher light,
but remember, I never lived in darkness.
It was love that dominated my character and drove my spirit.
Twas hope and aspiration that allowed me to awaken the vivid colors of yet another sunrise, and
return to slumber, while the starry moonlit sky welcomed me, once again, to the wonders of my
life, reenacted in my dreams.
You were the sun bringing the brilliant colors,
that initiated my purpose for the day.
You were the moon that mirrored the sun's light, guaranteeing that no evil would
invade my dreams.

Every life has a purpose.
There is a plan for you,
and it exceeds everything you thought your capabilities to be.
You inspired my longevity.
Now you are the bearer of the torch that shines with my mission.
I have entrusted My Mission, My Most Prized Possession,
within the very depths of your soul.
I have faith, within your kind heart,
its intention can never be tarnished.

Remember,
Because of your birth,
You have the right to all the wonderment and goodness
this green earth has to offer.
So, expand your horizons and take advantage of opportunity.
As long as Love is your foundation,
the sky possesses no limits.

—Melissa McClinton, V



DON'T YOU TELL ME

You say forget about the past and live only in the present.
But I say, don't you tell me—
I can never forget.

You say, "Don't blame me for the mistakes that my ancestors
made. They didn't know better. It was okay then."
But I say, it was never okay.
And they knew that.

My people have endured slavery.
Undergone apartheid.
And today, we are still living in a society where
institutionalized racism exists.

You say you understand.
But you don't, because you can't.

You say how can I say "we" when it wasn't I. When it wasn't
I, myself, who, for 500 years, picked the cotton, felt the
licks, experienced the rape, the violations, the hatred.
How can I say "we?"

I say "we" because my people and I are the same.
Their anguish is my pain.
Their miseries are my tears.
Their dreams are my aspirations.

You say "Go back to Africa," but we did not ask you to
bring us here.
You said we were slaves, now you say we are citizens.
I say, don't you tell me.

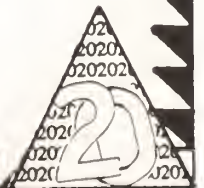
You say, "Now things have changed."
I agree.
You have changed the color of our people, the color of our
eyes, the shape of our features, the texture of our hair.

You have changed the mentality of our people:
Light is white, so it's alright.
Kinky is stinky, but straight is just great.
You have taught us to hate, and now we hate ourselves.

So don't you tell me not to blame you for your past when
history is repeating itself. Don't you tell me that you
don't identify with your ancestors, because we better
understand ourselves through our roots.

Don't you tell me because I won't listen.
I won't listen to your sympathy, your explanations, your
lies.
Don't you dare tell me, because 500 years of history speaks
for itself.

—Nabulungi Mack-Williams, II





AUSCHWITZ

Auschwitz. Auschwitz. My words cannot possibly express the horror of the insane crimes committed at Auschwitz. For what are mortal words when millions of people--PEOPLE--were butchered in a mission of mass genocide?

Konzentrationslager Auschwitz was the largest Nazi war machine. Four million Jews and an unknown number of gypsies and nomads were massacred there. They were kept alive only to be starved and forced to labor. They were kept alive only to die of disease. They were kept alive only to be gassed, suffocated, set afire or shot. With a sigh of relief we say, "Thank God it is over," but we are wrong, we are so very wrong.

The human race has never gained independence from Auschwitz. Its repressive grip has grasped the small neck of every people, every nation, and has crept inside the gulfs of every human heart.

Auschwitz was in Argentina in the 1970's when thousands of young people, suspected of communist involvement, were quietly kidnapped. They were imprisoned. They were tortured, shocked, beaten, raped and starved for months until the government militia men decided to kill. Their children were sold, now a parentless generation. Their bodies were dumped in sealed garbage cans, and the government claimed that the happenings of "The Disappeared" never took place.

Auschwitz is in Southwest China in Tibet. Invaded by the Chinese Army in 1944, Tibet has been occupied for nearly 50 years. During this time the Chinese government has taken steps to "cleanse" these peaceful people out of existence. Their cultural and religious practices are limited and controlled, and Tibetan women are by no means allowed to have children. The inhumanity in Tibet is a well-kept secret; tourists are greatly discouraged and reporters of any sort are forbidden.

Today, probably the most frightening thing of all is that Auschwitz is in the last place you would think to look: Auschwitz is in you. Auschwitz is the backbone of every racist statement, every ethnic or gender stereotype, every biased assumption you have ever made or thought. It is as far off as Buenos Aires' "Disappeared," as distant as Tibet and as near as your soul. Time and distance do not separate you from prejudices that lie within. Never forget the power and extent of Auschwitz. Never forget that Auschwitz, the "original" Auschwitz, began with one man's troubled thoughts. One person's potent thoughts. Remember, because when you forget, you spit on the graves of the dead. Remember so that we can stop it. Auschwitz we must never forget. Auschwitz.

—Mari Guarino, II



ALL IS QUIET

All is quiet.

Dawn gently ebbs over onto the ancient graying night. The morning songs of birds begin to crack the silence, and the pink sky gives way to the radiance of the youthful sun. The trees stretch their branches as they and the other flora awake, and turn their face to be warmed by the brightness. The green face of the valley has long been darkened by the wet crimson, and the new day is already drying it, encrusting it onto the weak blades.

Among the bodies that lay silently on the burdened grass is a stirring figure.

The soldier opens his eyes. The brilliant blue sky burns his eyes and he turns away. He struggles to sit up. Leaning on his hands, he looks with sodden eyes upon the valley. He falls back again.

He must wait.

They will come for him, he knows, and bandage his wounds. He will see his family and his baby. He will just have to stay awake, and wait. He searches for some memories of what has happened.

He remembers blasts of light and noise, dirt spewing from the living ground. He remembers screaming, endless screaming.

He remembers a burst, and him flying, backward, and landing, and. . . Nothing.

He squeezes his eyes shut, and he wants to forget. The trees whisper to him, and the sky echoes the screaming. . .

He must stay awake. He must wait for them to come. They will come. He must wait.

His body hurts, but he knows he has done his duty for his country.

The night presses upon the day and soon the darkness shrouds the great valley, and the soldier watches the slowly appearing stars. He is tired.

He will just close his eyes. They will know he is not dead, when they come. He will just close his eyes for a minute, to rest them.

He takes a lingering look at the stars, and in the trees a bird sadly sings a farewell song. The trees drop their tired branches and the valley slips into its silent slumber.

He closes his eyes.

The sky brightens over the receding night and for the third day, the morning greets the motionless valley. The trees are not awake, and the birds have not yet begun to sing.

All is quiet.

—Christina Tinglof, III



IT'S LIKE LOSING YOUR BEST FRIEND

It had seemed like a normal night. My best friend's family had come over for dinner as they often did. Ashleigh and I had played together as usual, excluding her sister by closing doors, spelling out words, and acting grown-up. We had laughed at her tears, and later at our jokes. We had played our traditional game of house and had been disappointed when dinner was ready. I had thought it would be a minor disruption, a break in our play. I was wrong. After dinner, we had gone into the living room to "talk." Grown-up stuff. Boring. I figured we kids would soon leave. We didn't. I sat in my favorite chair: a big, black recliner that I could lean back in until I was sure that I would fall, but never did. It was comfortable and reliable. I was sitting there, thinking about nothing in particular, when I noticed my mother approaching me. In fact, everyone had gathered around my chair. And then I had a premonition of something—I'm not sure what. It wasn't an ESP-type thing where a picture of a future event comes to mind. It was just a bad feeling in my stomach, probably caused by my mother's expression and the circle of people around me.

"Hilary."

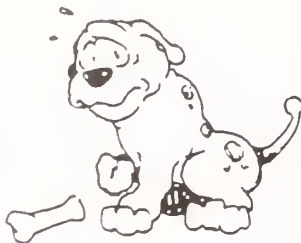
I fell. Not back in my chair but forward, so that I was sitting upright. There was a loud noise as the chair landed, coinciding with the drop of my stomach. Something bad, something bad, was all that I could think. My mother's tone of voice was not my mother's tone of voice. It

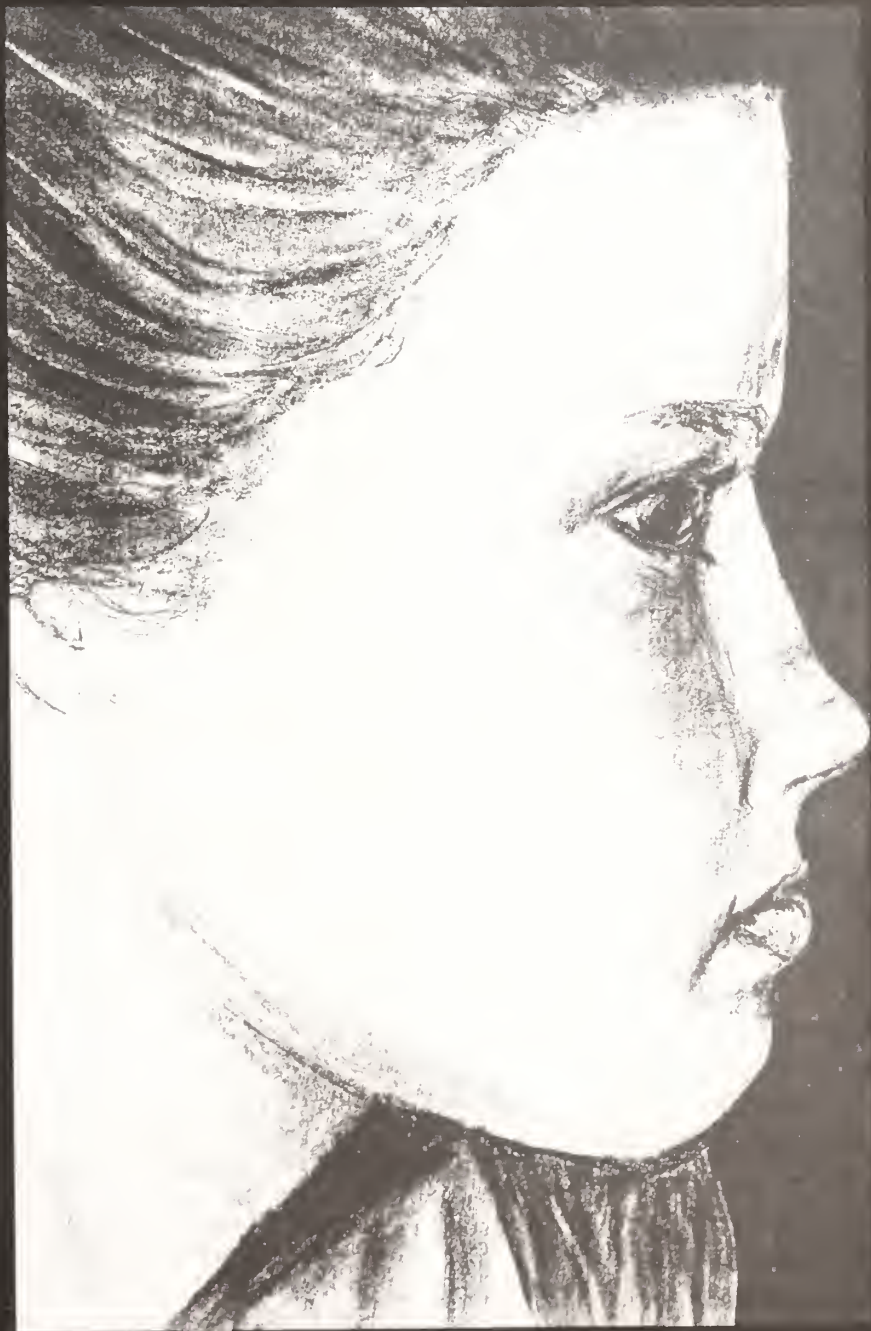
was the something-bad-has-happened-and-I'm-sorry-so-I'm-going-to-try-to-say-this-as-easily-as-possible tone of voice.

"Ashleigh and her family are moving to Texas." Shock. *This* I had not imagined. Disbelief. I looked at Ashleigh for a denial of this terrible. Her blond-haired head bobbed yes, it's happening, followed by a small shrug. I leapt up and raced to the bathroom, slamming the door as loudly as possible.

My first feeling was anger, not sadness. How could Ashleigh do this to me? How could her parents disregard our friendship? How could my parents let them leave? And Ashleigh didn't care. Surely she had known about this and hadn't told me. The twitch of her shoulders hadn't said, "I won't let this happen," or "I'll miss you forever;" just "Oh well." That's when I felt the pain of loss—of never having Ashleigh to play house with me, or spell out words, or sit next to me in school again. I felt very alone; my stomach was knotted. I must have cried, because it was the only release of my feelings that I could have. After a while my mom coaxed me out of the bathroom. I angrily said good-bye to everyone, while hoping that Ashleigh would show some emotion. The closest she came was, "Well, I'll still see you in school tomorrow." I guess for her it was sad to some extent, but mostly exciting; she was going to a new place, to do new things and make new friends. I was staying in the same place, losing her. I was alone.

—Hilary Krieger, 1





INATTENTION OF THE SCHOLAR

Idle. . .
 Awaiting the hour
 The dark cloud hovers
 Anxious to devour
 Heavy blinds sputtering
 A faulty catch
 Eager to block resistance
 Now their match
 A distant echo of drumming
 Closer still
 Incessant humming
 Annoyance flickers
 In the eye of the master

Stricken
 The dark cloud retreats
 Affronted by resistance
 Preparing for defeat
 Then
 Attention again diverted
 The dark cloud recovers
 His power reasserted
 Sputtering blinds, drumming, humming
 Resistance yields eagerly
 A conquest for the dark cloud
 A victory
 He moves on
 In search of a new victim

—Latoshia Brinson, I



JANUARY

Our song.
 A dizzy melody of childhood—
 giggles and
 kisses on the stairs.
 Floating song
 floating bum—
 remembrance of youth,
 of you
 with your cunning charm
 and chubby strength.

Our love
 as little clowns
 frozen, frightened on a concrete wall
 —you painted my name
 when we were so small—

Sometimes we're older but never
 at once—Sometimes our love is
 like January. . .

Again beckons January—
 is it time?
 time again for smiles in a
 crowded lobby and
 hungry kisses in the drizzle. . .

can you go
 can you bless me
 can you erase a January

—Deborah Milstein, III



THE SNOW

Small, white, social. Penetrating
The fabric of our society with each
Member that glides to follow its predecessors.

Though not pleased of their purpose,
Each knows it must cover
The surface of this place.
Each knows that, like humans,
Each of their kind is unique.
Yet, unlike humans, they stick together.

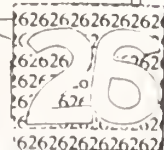
They understand the concept
Of strength in numbers,
Which we do not.
They can feel the oneness
That has made them strong,
Which we do not.

They hear the cries of man's neighbors.
And they weep for lack
Of something to say.
And in their weeping, they freeze
In the cold of man's vile animosity towards
Things different from themselves.

And in their frigid state,
They fall towards the cold earth's surface.
On which lies a colder essence.
It is the time of the wild.
The time when man's evil ignorance
Of the world about him is avenged.

It is the time of the cold: it is winter.
And they are the messengers
Of nature's sorrow.

—Mackie Coard, III



DREAM

"Enunciate," Lucy screams at her little sister in her faux-British accent as she watches the little girl assume the proper position to recite a monologue (in front of the only audience she's actually performed for, her cat Mirabelle, and her overly critical sister Lucy).

"Enunciate and PROJECT."

"It was the best of times, it was the w—"

"PROJECT!"

"It was the bes —"

"Anna, don't make me regret missing my only chance to see *The Nutcracker* with Susan just to stay home and help you pull yourself together for your audition. You have to work with me."

Feeling nothing but frustration as she tries to run out of the family room, Anna is so hot that she barely notices slamming her shoulder against the bookcase as she competes with her cat to get through the doorway first.

Later, she cracks her knuckles as she gnaws on a candy bar she knows she shouldn't be eating. She gets sick of searching for a fat lady's head in a jigsaw puzzle and climbs into her new flannel sheets with a smile on her face, knowing she'll be able to escape from the trials of the world and into her dream world of happiness.

Her mother wakes her up and asks why she's not working on her monologue. The little girl sighs and knows that she should practice her monologue. But she can't bring herself to get up and out of the new flannel sheets. If she does, she knows she won't be able to dream of her world with no pushy sisters, annoying mothers, or auditions.

Of course she didn't get a part in the play. Nobody expected her to. The director said, "Oh sweetie, ya know we'd luffta have ya, butcha-jus-don PROJECT enough. . . Maybe next time." Sure. Anna never wanted to be a dancing genie slave anyway.

She's trying to persuade her computer to print out a report she did on modern day Egypt. When nothing happens, Anna threatens to kill the computer, but being an amiable person, she

gives it one more chance.

Her mom calls her into the car. Usually Anna would walk to the house where she babysits but today she's running late (on account of her stubborn computer). Anna's mom asks her how long one little report can take. The little girl tries to explain the situation to her even though she knows her mother meant it as a hypothetical question.

Walking up the steps to the Kinneys' ranch house, Anna turns around and sees her mother waving frantically as she one-handedly tries to back the car out of the driveway onto Oak Street.

The girl rings the doorbell and waits. She's considering asking the Kinneys to pay her fifty cents more an hour for baby-sitting their two little brats. She shivers in the icy air and considers this a bad sign. She rings the bell again and rests her head and right shoulder against the vinyl siding. Hating her mother for not buying her a goose down parka from the department store, Anna slowly makes her way down the Kinneys' front steps, off the sidewalk, and onto Oak Street. She shoves her frozen fists into her jacket pockets and begins to walk, or wander, one or the other. Maybe she should have listened to her mother and brought gloves, but she didn't. Anna begins to wonder where the Kinneys are. She knows that they know that she comes to their house every Tuesday to baby-sit for Jamie and Chris. Maybe today is Monday. Wandering and wondering, Anna begins to dream. She dreams of her world with no annoying mothers, locked doors or cracks in the road. She musters up enough courage to take her somewhat thawed fist out of her pocket for long enough to read the Mickey Mouse hands on her watch. In a couple of hours she'll have to walk back to the Kinneys' house to meet her mother.

Anna gets home and has to wait for her slow mother with the keys, to open the apartment door.

Climbing into her new flannel sheets, the girl falls asleep and starts to dream about her perfect world of happiness that may or may not ever be.

—Eva McCloskey, V

BLESSED BY THE POPE

It started with the hat. It was a great hat—old, beat-up, brown leather—an Indiana Jones hat. I found out later that it had been blessed by the Pope which, I suppose, added to its charm. The hat was the first thing I noticed.

After the hat came the eyes: large, pale, clear blue, with long lashes; the kind that most women would die for. The rest of his face swept over me all at once. An oval face, friendly and familiar. One of those faces that you'd swear you've seen before. He wore wire rimmed glasses that made his eyes even larger. He had on a suit and tie, which was appropriate clothing for the situation. His face and manner seemed older than his sixteen years but then he walked across the room and joined us as we quoted from *Aladdin*.

Later, when we talked, it became clear that we shared many of the same interests: theater, U2, writing, people watching. . . I had never met anyone I had felt so comfortable with so quickly. I found myself telling him things I hadn't told my best friend.

We spent as much time together as we could that weekend. We walked and talked and laughed and were serious. I wore his hat. We sat and joked about the people around us, who were taking everything so seriously. He told me about his girlfriend and her family problems. He talked

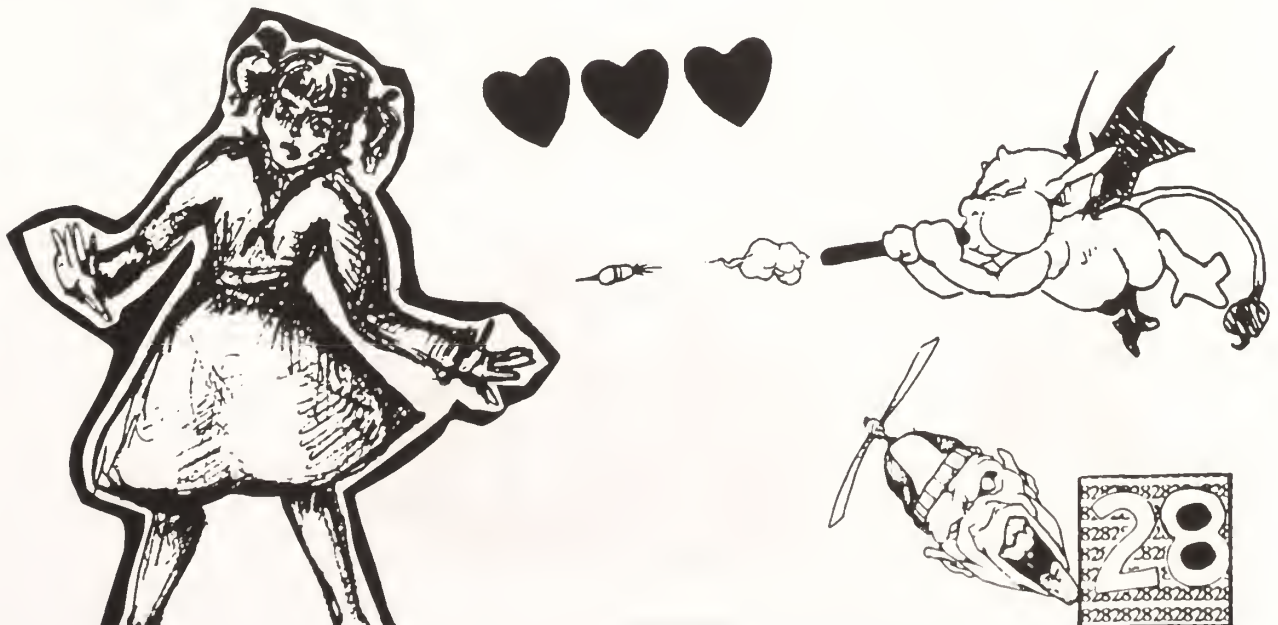
about his ambitions and dreams: going to college, becoming an actor, having a family. He told me about his trip to Denver to see the Pope, his family, his friends, and growing up in a small town in Pennsylvania. I learned more about him in the 72 hours I knew him than I've learned about friends I've had for five years.

I talked to him about myself, too. I told him about my last boyfriend, about my family, about my friends. He admired my ambitions in life, and we found out that we wanted many of the same things. He got to know a good friend of mine and admired how we related to each other. "Great comic timing!" he told us. We talked about everything imaginable. We even talked about what could have happened between us, had the circumstances been different.

I could have fallen in love with him that weekend. In a way, I did. I had known him for less than a week. I didn't know his last name. We never touched, except for a good-bye hug. We didn't promise to write or call; we didn't even exchange addresses or phone numbers.

I still think of him sometimes and smile. Every once in a while, I wonder what could have been, or if we could have been anything at all.

—Jordanna L'Esperance, *I*





ARIA

As I plod through the crowd of tourists and local teenagers, I seek a place to stop. I find one, near some benches out of the way of the mainstream. I place my battered violin case on the cold, broken cobblestones and gently remove the precious instrument. After carefully tuning the strings to the extent that my freezing, aching fingers will allow, I begin to play.

From the very first note, a crowd begins to gather. I'm not sure whether it's because of my playing itself or how ridiculous I look, in my lime green Salvation Army parka and rotten sneakers held together with silver duct tape. Perhaps it's a little of both. I feel humiliated, certain that they are not really here to listen, but to stare at me. I notice two teenagers, not much younger than myself, elbow one another and giggle. I close my eyes.

Instantly, I am no longer in Quincy Marketplace but in Symphony Hall or Carnegie Hall or some other place just as splendid. I can hear the quiet accompaniment of an orchestra behind me, see the fluid motions of a conductor in black tails on his podium, and feel the excitement of a standing ovation as I finish my solo masterpiece with a flourish. I am no longer aware of the coldness of the cobblestones through the hole in my sneaker, nor of my empty stomach or equally hungry heart. I am wearing a black sequined evening gown, and instead of a scarred pawn shop fiddle in my left hand, I am wielding a million dollar Stradivarius.

The clink of a nickel being carelessly tossed into my open case (by a woman in a fur coat) jerks me out of my dream as I am making my fourth curtain call. I still hear my ovation as I bend over, not to pick up roses thrown by some adoring fan, but to peer into my case and roughly estimate the amount of money within. During the hour I have been playing, I have collected barely two dollars. My hands are numb with cold.

Sighing, I begin Tchaikovsky's "String Serenade." But I'm not putting my heart into it. I know I'm good. At least, better than a street performer, I know someday people will pay as much as a hundred dollars to hear me perform. . .not a measly nickel out of pity. Again, I close my eyes. . .

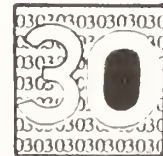
—Nancy Shaffer, *II*



THE PICTURE

We sat at the end of the oval, cherrywood table, which had survived forty years of parties, family dinners, and children running around under it. While sipping my diet soda, I noticed the objects on the table: the neat pile of old *Yankee* magazines, the well worn pack of cards (with which he played Solitaire daily and I, "Slapjack" with my sister on Sunday visits), the small crucifix, his plate of spaghetti with sauce on the side, and the picture. The small picture of my grandmother was set at the place where she sat for fifty years. He stared at it intently as he mechanically forced the strings of spaghetti into his mouth. Remembering my presence, he tore himself away from the world in which he was quickly becoming lost. He looked at me, a single tear rising over his stately cheekbones and tracing the lines of his soft, wrinkled skin, and said simply, "I ate lunch with her for forty years; I can't stop now." Unable to respond, I sat silently. He moved his gaze to the corner of the room where she had died in the hospital bed a few months before. He paused, attempted to compose himself and whispered, "She was a great lady."

—Maureen Hickey, *II*



TWO OF A KIND

The darkness of the night was giving way to the new light of a beginning day. The sky was aglow with pinks and light grays slowly turning into blue. Billy looked only momentarily at the sky before he turned his head. Today he didn't feel the awe he had felt on so many previous mornings. He wasn't alone in his room this morning. He wasn't standing by his bedroom window this morning while the rest of his family slept soundly under their covers trying to get through the worst of the tiresomeness he felt about his life everyday. He wasn't looking upon the New York City skyline feeling almost as if he was the only person in the world, and feeling as if he was the loneliest. The rising sun wasn't the only ascension of hope to begin his morning.

He must have been looking at her for an hour before the sunrise had even begun, and even when it did come, he really didn't notice. Today, he could only give a passing glance to the rising sun which, so many times, had gotten him through another day. The rising sun's importance in his life had been blocked out all of a sudden by having Annie with him this morning. Annie was doing more than any magnificent sunrise had ever done in his lonely mornings. Unlike the sunrise, the warmth of a sun's rays, and the changing colors of a morning sky, Annie was being seen by only him. Annie touched only him. When she woke up, she would talk to only him. She was there for only him.

Billy was holding her in his arms, keeping her warm as she slept in the chilly morning. Fall was just beginning in the city and the departure from summer was to be felt most in the mornings, when the temperature usually dipped fifteen to twenty degrees from what was normal for the still comparatively warm weather. Everything else was quiet within the park, except for the lapping of the water in the fountain and Billy's transistor radio, still faintly playing in the background. Silence was broken when the first morning jogger finally intruded upon their place of solitude. Billy instantly developed a bond of

resentment toward the jogger when he saw him. The intruder hurried his pace when he caught sight of the boy with a girl intertwined in his arms in the grass. Billy realized for the first time that this night would soon come rushing to its conclusion. He was hoping that this wouldn't be the end of his ever seeing her.

Billy was moving a cascade of her chestnut hair that was covering her eye when she woke up. She turned around and hugged him as if her were her pillow before realizing where she was. She got up quickly and moved a few feet away from him to stand by the fountain with her back turned away. Being that close to someone, especially someone she just met, scared her. She had to get out of there before something happened, before she was ready for it. She also had to worry about getting home in time to avoid getting the riot act from her parents.

"What's the time?" she asked.

"Around seven in the morning," he said.

"Okay," she said with a frantic edge to her voice, "my parents aren't up yet. I have some time before they'll find anything out." She started to pace around in a little circle. "But what if they got up early for some reason," she said to herself, "I'll tell them I fell asleep at the party and spent the night. . . Yeah, they'll believe that and I won't get yelled at. That'll work!!" She was just about to tell him to drive her home, when all of a sudden she decided she just couldn't go through with it.

Billy was still sitting in the same spot where he had held her just a few minutes before picking at tufts of grass on the ground. She went back to him and plopped herself right beside him. He placed his arms around her waist.

"How's your head?" he asked.

"Messed up. . .and I mean more than the whiskey," she said.

"Bad hangover?"

"Raging. . .but I can deal with it, I guess."

"Is it your first?"

"No, but it feels like the worst."

"Yeah, I bet it is. Last time I drank that much I was a total mess at school for two days."

"So you're a drinker?"

"Yeah, but not to excess or anything. Just when I need it. You know what I mean."

She nodded in agreement. Even with her hangover, she didn't regret what she had done for a minute. At least she had gotten a chance to really talk.

"It's not going to be that bad; trust me."

"Whatever... I mean I like being her with you but still. . . God, things seemed so much easier a year ago."

"Are you sure things were ever that great? If they really had been, then why did you end up in a hospital?"

"But it seems so stupid now! I couldn't even do it right! And I just made everything worse in the end. You'll never understand that! I mean who could ever really understand the hell I'm going through? My friends can't even stand to be around me because they're so scared and confused by what I did."

"Annie, do you really believe that? Do you think it's never happened to anyone else?"

"No, but those people who do end up doing that have real reasons for it. Like terminal cancer, or their best friend gets killed, their mother and father die, they lose their job, and have their house burned down all in the same year. Those people have real reasons to want to die, but me? I have no reason. Everybody tells me my life is fine. I shouldn't have done it, just shouldn't have. . . God, what if they're right? Maybe I am just crazy."

"No, you're not! You're not crazy and what you did isn't that hard to understand. Who said life was such a great thing anyway!? I certainly don't believe it."

"But still I. . ."

Billy took her by the shoulders and said, "It's all right. It really is and one day you'll just learn how to deal with it all and things will get better."

"Yeah, and I suppose you know it all, and

now I can feel all right knowing you understand? Well, I don't believe you!" She went back to standing by the fountain.

He went over and stood next to her. "Do you think I can't understand?"

"Yeah," she said sobbing a little.

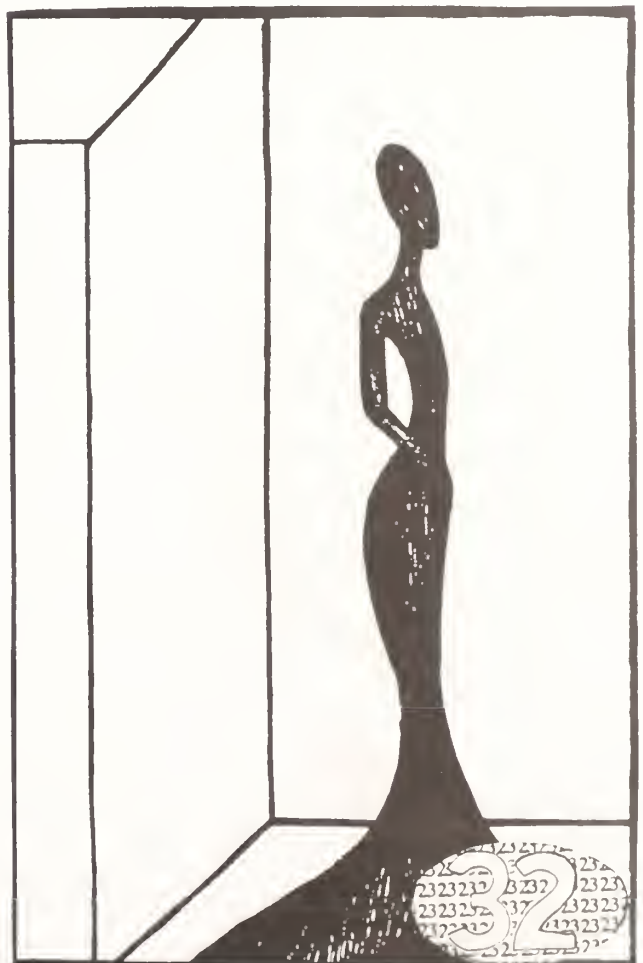
"Then look at my wrists," he said, unbuckling his cuffs to let her see the knotted vertical lines that scarred them. "I did it a year ago. I went through it all and maybe more than you're going through right now. I really can understand. I really do."

"I really want to believe that one day," she said.

"I'm going to make sure of it."

Sunrise was complete. The sky was blue and the sun now filtered throughout the park. A small pack of joggers ran by. It was time to leave.

—Chantalle LaFontant, II



APPREHENSIVE

The mustard-phased orange juice deepens the moment and as I ponder your most recent injustice I look at the sky, which is totally darkened and perverted because of the complexities which you go through in every word. You haunt in me some melancholy dribble of lust—though you mean it to be love. I try to pretend that you're really penciling a sketch of me and as I try to dress, you try the opposite. There is a struggle, but from either side, you're unaware, of how hard the other side is fighting. But as we were told today, our lives are trees, although that is another battle. And although your face is marked by innocence, your mind is growing greener and greener. Green because I decided not to forfeit my bark to you. Green because of various leaves that were given to you in deceit. Oh stop the tree in the same way you stop a car. Push the brakes. Pull out the key. Lie on the hood and as you soak in the sea of the sun on your brow-shore of your hairline receding, it is not, wipe your hand by the sea, like a wind. A wind that is like the blow of your breath in summer, when you look towards the horizon, you see only one boat, which captures your attention and makes you ponder infinity. Makes you wonder why you wore boots and what you would do once you got there. And if the timing is right, and if you follow it should be, stand up tall laughing, hold your arms out sober, and dance for your life and mine.

—Amy Lawless, II



PINEAPPLE

I just couldn't seem to get the little pointy things out of the pineapple. It was actually beginning to annoy me. I had to keep cutting away at it, wasting my \$1.99 pineapple. My friend was yelling at me to stop, but I was only half listening to her.

I could hear a phone ringing, a man telling me that I was going to Japan for free, my own shrieks, and my father's disapproval. I was cutting a pineapple that day, too. I was happy then, though.

I remember being in the cafeteria at Kyoto University. I was eating pineapple. Pineapple never tasted as good as it did that day. I can actually see it, sitting on my tray, next to some sushi and cold green tea. My God, was that good pineapple!

"You're crazy," she was saying. I looked down and my \$1.99 pineapple was in mutilated shreds. But the pointy things were gone. When I looked over, I saw her five years ago, with short hair, sitting in the same seat, eating mashed potatoes and picking the bread crumbs off of chicken cutlets.

"You know," she tells me, "you did do everything right, it's not fair." I stare at her and she becomes a big blob of nothing. In that blob is a heart, beating hard and furiously. A heart so big that it is too big. I want to tell her that she cares and feels too much.

Her screams are growing more urgent and I can see the blob changing forms. I focus my eyes, and I can see her, her head down, resting on her folded arms. I want to talk but I can't. I laugh and I wonder what she would do if she knew just how numb I felt.

She looks at me and I know I have to talk. "Want some pineapple," I ask, "It's good."

She seems to know that it's not good; that it can't taste and never will taste as good as it did last summer. She looks away because she can't do a thing. No one can.

—Kristen D'Avolio, I



SNOWCRACKER

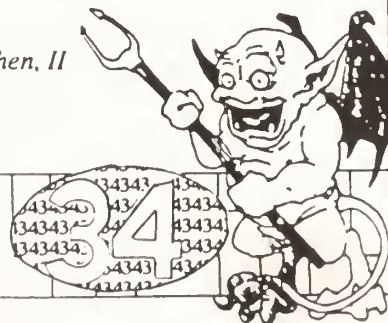
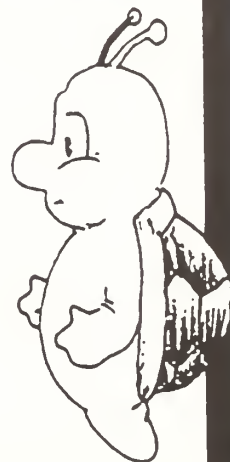
Damn, Damn! How could I have possibly been so stupid? I had a month to do this report and instead I decided to leave it until the weekend before it was due. To make matters worse, the only day I could go to the library was also the day I had to see *The Nutcracker Ballet*. To make this truly a day for mayhem, the banana taxi couldn't get here. I had to flee a warm library to a cold street, and one would think the least they could have done was get here on time. Oh! No, that would have made things just a bit too easy for me. Twenty minutes pacing back and forth in boots that must have been part of an ice sculpture. Great! Before the taxi could get there the dancers started to fall down.

Their little, white slippered feet danced along my shoulders, head, arms, and legs. They loved to twist, turn, and toss about. Rising high in the air the white clad ballerinas danced carelessly, not caring where they went. They'd fly in one direction and then soar in another, savagely grasped and gracefully thrown any which way by their partner, the wind. Sometimes their flight was sweetly slow. Other times it was violently vigorous. After a while many of the ballerinas fell lazily to the ground and joined their exhausted sisters. One, a prima donna, not wishing to join her sisters lying on the stage, rested on my nose. She was the star of the ballet. Her tutu glistened, glowed, shimmered, and shone with a whimsical whiteness. I wanted to watch this sleeping dancer, but then I sneezed and she was captured by her lover, the wind. What beauty, what style, what...

Honk, honk! "Heh, lady I ain't got all day." What a boor. He acted as if he was the one who had to wait thirty minutes. I gracefully stomped to the taxi. It took several minutes to shift my body so that I could comfortably lie on the lumpy seat. My ballerinas kept landing on the driver's glass stage despite the countless times he raised and lowered the thin black curtain. Though I was happy my ballerinas kept fighting the curtain, I wanted to cry when I saw one crushed by the thin line. From inside the taxi I could hear the faint whistling of violins.

I was very happy to leave that horrid cab. I was so happy I tipped the horrible man double what I should have. As I stepped out onto the street, I was overcome by the sounds of violins, violently being played to reach a crescendo. My ballerinas were being twirled by the wind to reach an endless climax. With a yearning look at the harsh softness of the dance, I stumbled into the warmth of the theater. On the window my ballerinas displayed themselves, their white tutus preventing me from seeing the dancing. They both denied and tempted. I shuffled to my seat with a thousand "Excuse me's." Flopping down I settled impatiently to watch the beginning of *The Nutcracker*. I grumbled throughout and at the end flew into the night air to watch my ballerinas dance their Snowcracker.

—Phatiwe Cohen, II



SUSIE

Susie was dead. Hellen could hardly believe the horrible truth. When she came home from work she entered her living room and there on the floor lay Susie, motionless, broken glass all over and around her. There was no hope; she was gone forever.

Hellen sat down. She had that annoying itch inside her nose, the kind she always got when she was about to cry. But she didn't this time. She just sat on the sofa, hugging a pillow, rocking back and forth, thinking about what had happened.

Of course, Sam was the one who killed Susie, Hellen had no doubt about it. Did Susie have some premonition too, Hellen wondered. Maybe. Oh, Hellen knew she should have been more careful in keeping Sam away from Susie; she knew he liked Susie's type. Yes, she remembered the way Sam's big green eyes lit when he saw the beauty. And Susie was gorgeous; she had her own style, and was extremely attractive with her gracious, quick, nervous movements. Susie was a charming one, and Hellen should have seen trouble coming.

Only after two days of Susie's stay with Hellen, Sam started visiting her apartment too often, in hope of seeing Susie, naturally. Sometimes they couldn't get in touch; those times he would just wait by the closed door, showing no impatience or annoyance, in hope of getting in and seeing the object of his affection.

Hellen wasn't pleased with Sam's frequent visits, although she liked him very much. They went way back together. She knew he had a dark past, had been in many serious fights on the streets, had friends with rather questionable personalities and notorious

reputations. Hellen also knew that although he acted as he pleased he was a loyal friend to her. He usually dropped by with regular unexpectedness and never stayed for a long while. He also had a funny way of entering and exiting through a window (Hellen lived on the first floor) when the weather was nice. Yes, Sam certainly did have a colorful personality.

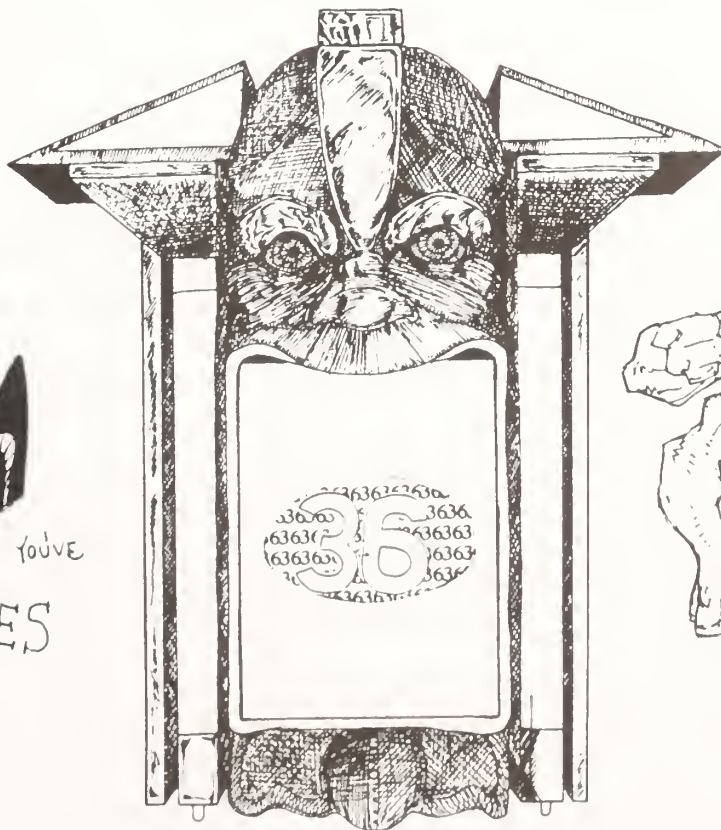
And then this colorful personality was after Susie. Oh, he was a dangerous one to poor, innocent Susie's kind. Hellen warned her and saw to it that their tête-à-têtes were as brief as possible—Susie apparently had nothing against Hellen's interference.

But Hellen got careless. On this fine summer afternoon she left for work, leaving her window open. That's how Sam must have gotten in. Hellen never thought that Sam could turn out to be such a lout as to enter during her absence. But he did.

She pictured in her mind how he must have jumped in, maneuvering slowly toward the place where Susie was. She imagined what he looked like: the call of the wild in his light-sensitive eyes, his nose moving slightly for Susie's familiar sweet smell, his claws sharp and ready, his whole body prepared for attack. A picture of a true predator. He concentrates, gathers into a tight little fur ball, his tail dancing frantically from side to side, and jumps. . .

Oh, no, Hellen couldn't bring herself to picture what happened next. She got up, took the corpse, and gingerly threw it into the toilet, pausing a minute before flushing. Then, she went to the living room to clean up the broken glass of the aquarium. . . Wet feline paw prints were leading up to the window ledge.

—*Valerie Pasternak, II*



BREAK
IT AND SO YOU'VE
GOT TWO
MEAT PIES



THE WALK

Everyone had gone somewhere it seemed, except for me and some people I had little desire to see. So I decided to take a walk around the city.

I knew I'd be leaving the city in several months...for good. In fact, I had decided to leave the country, so I felt I needed to make one big, round trip to visit all the places that held memories and beauty for me.

I walked through street after street, stopping occasionally, walking for a good five hours. The places I passed held both good and bad memories for me, each one having one thing in common: being there made me feel neither good nor bad.

A lot of people were at these places, making their own memories, but it all meant nothing to me. The people I wanted to be there, weren't. They were somewhere else, far away, and I was the farthest thing from their minds. I wanted them back, and I wanted them to be what I remembered them as. I just wanted so badly to run into one of these people, any one of these people...but everyone was gone, and soon, *my* time to march on would come. But the difference was that unlike their groups, I was to walk alone.

I felt a little foolish for missing anyone or anything because I knew that I was not being missed by anyone. I had chosen to stay, and regret was not an issue; it was remorse.

Whether I wanted to or not, I had to walk in some direction, towards something. I walked to the Prudential Center. Here I spotted a kid with glasses sitting in the Food Court. Amidst all of the tourists, he seemed to be the only soul I knew on the planet.

So I sat with him, although to be honest, I had never been very crazy about him. Sometimes he told jokes that made me feel stupid because I didn't understand them. There was just something about him that bothered me, and I wasn't sure what it was.

He sat at a big, round table by a fire alarm, staring vacantly at me. I should have been nice to him since he was the anyone I was looking for. Yet, I could not help but feel uneasy around him.

Surprisingly, he was depressed as well, so the two of us sat across from each other, exchanging occasional grunts for about ten minutes.

Then he stopped the small talk and started being serious. He began to tell me about the last few days and how he had spent them. The tale sorely lacked rationale, simply because it dealt with emotions. He didn't explain the "why" of what he had done, but for some reason, I began to understand.

Often, when I had observed this guy in school, I found it hard to believe how much effort he put forth for others. I took the moment to assess his feelings of despondency. Instead of laughing as I would usually do, I told him quite bluntly that he should live his life for himself instead of for others, since he would otherwise get used and taken for granted.

In my opinion, *I* had done too many nice things for people, spent too much time on people, worried too much about people, only to feel used and taken for granted when those people did nothing for me. I had learned to do what I wanted, take what I wanted, say what I wanted, as well as to shoot back at those people whom I felt had done me wrong by doing nothing.

He sat quietly for a while, staring at the tabletop.

Then he looked up at me and just told me that I was wrong.

I got up and left, beginning to walk again as the sun lowered in the sky. I was angry. I thought that I should have just told him that he was a fool, and left it like that.

I walked to a spot outside a pizza shop near Northeastern and stopped by the #39 bus stop. There was a lot of traffic and many people walking. It was a "good memory" spot. The person who had shared the memory had since given me many bad ones. But I didn't feel the usual rage. At this point, I realized what it was about that guy that I had always resented.

He had faith. He had not given up on other people. In a way, he owned a magic that I had willfully thrown away. I had put my faith

into the wrong people who now had the right to laugh at me, not because they had used me, but because I had become as self-serving as they were.

This guy had one eye on the mountain top and one watching the path he walked. I, on the other hand, had been watching only the mountain top, and after turning down hundreds of dead ends, had begun to concentrate solely on the path. I now realized that the mountain top was a hundred miles behind me.

I stood completely still. I breathed in my

arrogance and wondered what I should do. Actually, I had known all along what I should do; I just didn't want to privately suffer amongst non empathetic people again. It was strange to think of that guy as having such intestinal fortitude and as having bested me.

So I decided to admit to myself that I was losing an unwinnable battle, and I began to conquer my biggest fears.

I would try again.

—Liam Carleton, *I*





I REMEMBER

I remember
 losing my first tooth
 in the second grade
 It wiggled a lot
 and came out in my apple
 And it bled, and felt weird
 but I was so proud!
 And shocked
 at how rich I was
 when the Tooth Fairy
 left me **TWO WHOLE DOLLARS**
 under my pillow.

I remember
 waking up so many
 Christmas mornings
 And sneaking downstairs-
 "Just a peek!"

And waiting
 and waiting
 and waiting
 'Til 7:30

When my parents said
 they'd get up
 I wondered
 how they could be
 so tired

When so many surprises
 Waited downstairs.

Because the minute
 the clock
 said 7:30

My brother

My sister

And me
 would run in
 and wake them up.

They would groan
 but, laughing, get up
 Anyway.

And the cookies for Santa
 would be gone
 and we'd open our presents
 and be too loud
 but Mom and Dad didn't care
 'cause it was Christmas.





I remember
searching on Easter Morning
for our baskets
left by
the Easter Bunny
And then all of us
Sneaking a piece of
candy
before breakfast
Grandma saw
but just winked
With a
Mischievous
glint
in her eyes
Then we'd run
Outside
In only our pajamas
Only to have to come
inside again
to get dressed
and then look for
the Easter eggs.

And I never wondered
Why children couldn't see
the Tooth Fairy
or the Easter Bunny
or Santa Claus
and I never doubted
They would come.
I used to think
growing up
Would be the best thing
in the world
But now I see
that some parts
aren't as fun
like not believing
in Santa Claus.

—Allyson Vinci, VI



SPRING

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Ken Eng

BACK COVER:

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Liam Carleton/Rebecca Morrison

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ARTWORK LAYOUT

DESIGN:

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